



U.S. Representative **ROBERT T. MATSUI**

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JOBS

Representative Robert T. Matsui believes that ensuring good jobs for working families— in Sacramento and around the nation— is one of his core responsibilities as a Member of Congress. In addition to directly creating jobs by investing in schools, roads, and airports, Matsui believes in improving the lives of workers through education, job training, and protecting the minimum wage. He is a national leader in the fight to strengthen Social Security and retirement savings opportunities while promoting affordable health care available for all Americans. At a time when rank-and-file workers are facing a crisis of no confidence in corporate executives, Matsui has introduced legislation that would hold corporations more accountable for their actions.

While he has long promoted enhanced international trade, Matsui has carefully balanced his pro-trade agenda with a commitment to protecting and supporting workers displaced through new international competition. With Rep. David Bonior (D-MI), Matsui introduced legislation in 1998 to consolidate the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and NAFTA Transition Adjustment Assistance (NAFTA-TAA) programs and authorize the new combined program for five years. The single, more efficient program to provide training and economic assistance for workers adversely affected by imports or manufacturing shifts in production has since been a model for Democratic proposals to ensure workers are not unfairly harmed by opening new trade opportunities. Matsui has opposed the most recent Republican efforts to pass a fast-track bill that would fail to ensure an appropriate participatory role for Congress— needed for members to safeguard their constituents' interests— in designing new trade deals.

LEADERSHIP

- ?? **Ninety-one percent 2001 Vote Approval Rating** (87% lifetime), AFL-CIO
- ?? **Award of Appreciation**, Greater Sacramento Urban League (1996, 1999)
- ?? **Honoree of Robert T. Matsui Vocational Training Complex**, Sacramento Job Corps (1997)
- ?? **Award of Appreciation**, International Association of Firefighters Local F-57 (1994)
- ?? **Distinguished Public Service Award**, La Cooperativa farmworkers' union (1988)
- ?? **Legislator of the Year**, California Governor's Committee for Employment of the Handicapped (1984)
- ?? **Award of Gratitude**, American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO Local 1857 (1983)

CURRENT AGENDA— 107TH CONGRESS

Matsui believes in a legislative agenda that helps create quality jobs, rather than discouraging them. For this reason, he has strongly opposed the bad policy crafted and passed by the Republican-managed House of Representatives. In March 2001, Matsui voted against overturning the nation's first workplace ergonomics standard, which had been implemented by the Clinton Administration after more than a decade of struggle by workers and their unions for protection from repetitive stress injuries [S.J.Res.6]. In May 2001, he voted against school vouchers that drain taxpayers' money to pay for private and religious school tuition [H.R. 1]. And Matsui repeatedly cast votes against bad economic policy that has done little to help the average American while making the rich even wealthier [Bush Millionaire Tax Cut, H.R. 1836; Tax Break Economic Stimulus I, H.R. 3090; Tax Break Economic Stimulus II, H.R. 3529].

As a former chair and ranking member of the House Ways & Means Subcommittee on Trade, Matsui has continued to lead caucus opinion on major trade initiatives. In the current Congress, he has opposed the unbalanced fast-track bill proposed by Republican managers [H.R. 3005]. Though he has a track record clearly demonstrating support for expanded trade, Matsui believes that the legislation proposed by Rep. Bill Thomas would fail to allow Congress proper leverage in future trade deals— leverage it needs to ensure fairness to all Americans. The House fast-track bill also failed to acknowledge that economic changes resulting from new trade can negatively impact some jobs, and Matsui believes our nation has an obligation to support those workers. He argues that trade deals must incorporate Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) programs providing income support, health care, and retraining for American workers directly harmed by new international competition. New deals must also ensure compliance with basic labor standards banning slavery and child labor among our partners. These requirements for trade deals are not novel, but they must be enforced in future considerations.

Matsui has also fought for new laws that would ensure responsibility and accountability from corporate executives at a time when boardroom scandals have drained American trust in private sector leadership. He believes CEOs and their management teams must have personal interests aligned with both shareholders and employees. He has therefore introduced legislation that would prohibit executives from being rewarded for manipulation of pension funds at the expense of employees and retirees, among other safeguards. Matsui has challenged the Republican majority to put workers and their jobs first.

PAST ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Introduced Bipartisan Pension Reduction Disclosure Act. In 1999, with the support of the Clinton Administration, Matsui introduced a bipartisan bill requiring greater disclosure of the impact to employees resulting from certain pension conversions. The legislation was aimed at providing a "right-to-know" for workers affected by the trend toward converting traditional pension plans to "cash-balance" pension plans. For older workers in particular, these conversions can result in a reduction of expected pension benefits. Matsui's bill would have required disclosures, in plain English, 45 days in advance of any conversion. "Hard working Americans deserve secure retirements. Workers should not be kept in the dark about how pension plan changes affect them," Matsui said. "People are banking on their pensions for when they retire, they have a right to know if their pensions are going to change." [106th Congress: H.R. 3047].

Promoted Fair Enforcement of International Trade Pacts. Representative Matsui's prominent role in congressional trade oversight has allowed him to be one of the most vocal supporters of fair trade enforcement. For example, when market-opening negotiations with Japan broke down in 1994, Matsui called for "decisive action," including the imposition of trade sanctions if necessary. "We have had 31 separate trade agreements with Japan and yet our trade deficit with Japan has increased because the Japanese bureaucracy has deliberately delayed the implementation of any of these agreements," Matsui said. "We are seeking nothing more than a level playing field... If [the Japanese] fail to make good on their agreement, we have every right to examine retaliatory options."

Fought for Sacramento's Victims of Military Downsizing. The Sacramento area was hit disproportionately hard by base closures in the 1990s as part of a national effort to reduce the size of the United States Military. Representative Matsui fought adamantly against the closure of McClellan Air Force Base, Mather Air Force Base, and the Sacramento Army Depot, and sought to provide maximum support and transition assistance for workers in the community. "These employees are losing their jobs through no fault of their own, but because our nation's security needs are changing," Matsui said as the Sacramento Army Depot approached its 1994 closing. "These people have worked long and hard to keep the U.S. strong and they deserve every assistance in finding a new job." Matsui sought to maximize government job placement for downsized employees and ensure every worker on the bases had access to all the placement resources of the Department of Defense. He introduced the Base Community Recovery Act of 1991 that would have provided tax and wage credits for transitioning employees and new construction projects that would employ them. [102nd Congress: H.R. 3112].

Sought a Balanced Immigration Policy. Representative Matsui supported measures ensuring that American immigration policy reflects our values and needs in supporting families, economic growth, employment opportunities, and fairness. He opposed 1988 legislation designed to provide fewer visas for family members. He voted for the 1990 Family Unity and Employment Opportunity Act, saying it would "reaffirm the greatest of all American traditions— unifying families from around the world under the umbrella of American democracy." And in 1993, he cautiously supported President Clinton's proposal for additional law enforcement resources to crack down on smugglers while revising the nation's asylum policies. "We need to be extremely careful that we do not violate the standards and principles that have contributed to the mix of cultures, talents, and skills that have made this country great," Matsui said. [100th Congress: H.R. 2050; 101st Congress: H.R. 4300].

Supported Minimum Wage Increases. Representative Matsui has repeatedly supported efforts to raise the minimum wage in the spirit of fairness. He voted for 1989 legislation to raise the minimum wage from \$3.35 to \$4.25 and for 1996 legislation to \$5.15. Matsui supports current efforts to readjust the minimum wage, ensuring that it keeps pace with inflation. [101st Congress: H.R. 2710, P.L. 101-157; 104th Congress: H.R. 3448, P.L. 104-188].

Building Sacramento Infrastructure; Creating Quality Jobs. Representative Matsui has won many federal infrastructure investment projects for his Sacramento district while in Congress. The two greatest— federal support for a light rail transit system and a new downtown federal courthouse building to replace outmoded and overcapacity facilities— have brought thousands of construction jobs to Sacramento. Matsui supports the Davis-Bacon Act, which requires that not less than the locally prevailing wage be paid to workers employed under federal construction contracts, and has made for quality jobs in the Fifth District. Matsui views such projects as wins from all perspectives, substantially improving the life of the city and anchoring downtown redevelopment while offering valuable job opportunities.